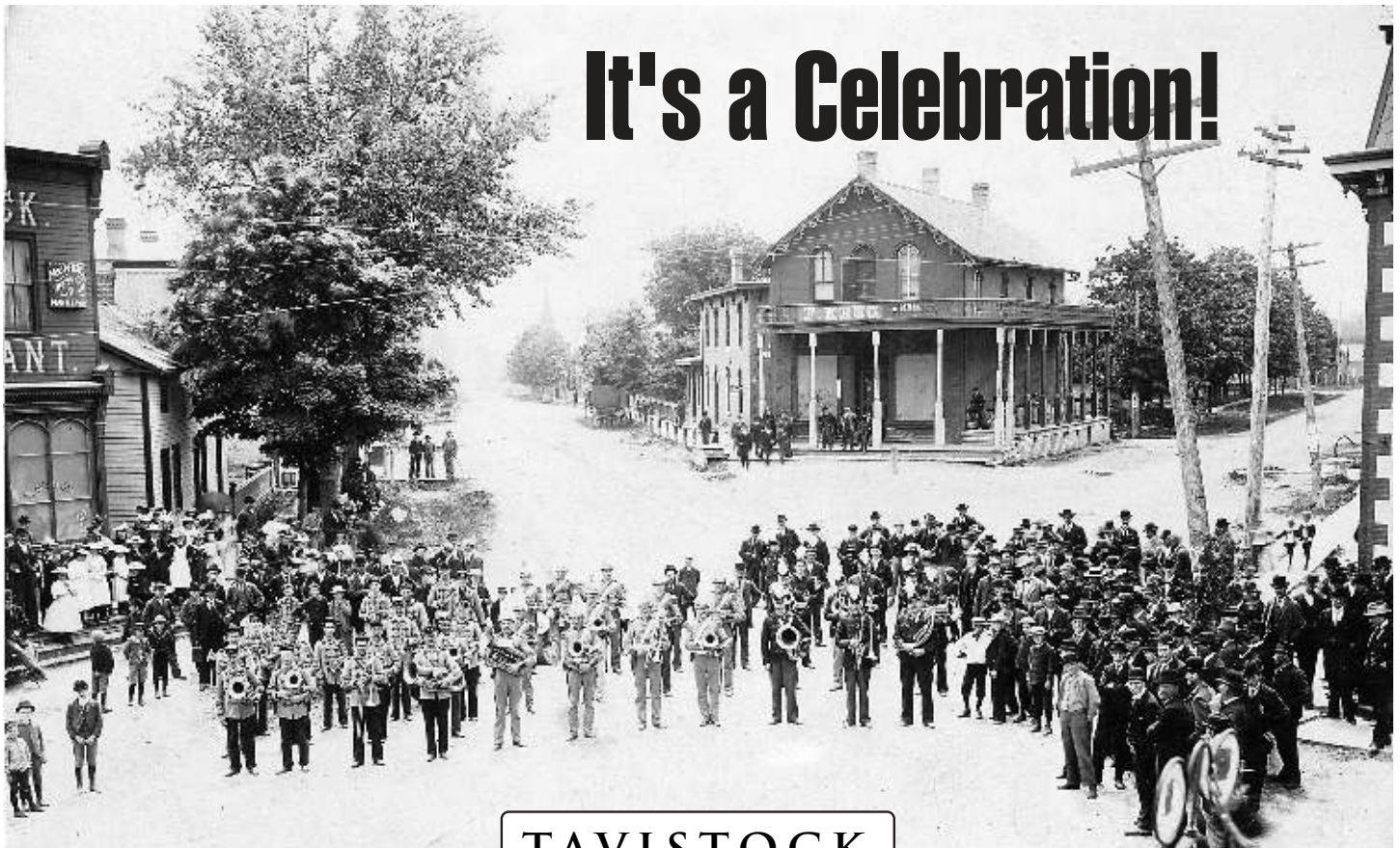


# YESTERDAY

News from the Tavistock and District Historical Society

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**F**ireworks and floats. Band tattoos and baseball games. Most definitely church services morning, afternoon and evening on Sunday. Funz-A-Poppin vaudeville acts, dances, bed races, antique shows, food of every description and every bite delicious, tug-o-war competitions and even a Miss Tavistock 1948 Beauty Contest.

Tavistock's major celebrations ... Old Home Week in 1930 better known as the Old Boys' and Girls' Reunion; the 1948 Centenary honouring

TAVISTOCK  
**175**  
1848-2023

100 years of the founding of our village; and Tavistock's 150th Anniversary in 1998 ... have been outstanding events. After the fun is over and after the last goodbye has been said to all the thousands of attendees, one element remains as an ever-present reminder of our history.

It's our cairn.

The fieldstone cairn that now stands on the five corners by the Post Office has an interesting story.

*(continued on page two)*

(continued from page one)

In 1930 a group of local citizens wanted to honour the memory of Captain Henry Eckstein, the founder of Tavistock. They determined that an 8-foot cairn on the northeast corner of Woodstock and Hope Streets would be a fitting memorial. It would sit just steps away from the spot where Henry first set down roots in the new village he named Freiburg. Interestingly, the German name Eckstein translates to cornerstone in English. Donations poured in from people in the village and from former residents living throughout Canada and the USA. On June 29, 1930 the cairn was unveiled and dedicated in front of a large crowd.

Sadly, it became a sorry sight. Weather, time and vandals did much damage. Any thoughts of repair were



put on hold because of World War II. In 1948 the cairn, with repairs completed and a new plaque affixed, was the star of the show at the Tavistock Centenary.

The cairn guarded the northeast corner for another 30 years. In 1978 it was seriously damaged when a car collided with it. In 1980 a reconstruction program in Oxford County saw the cairn removed, rebuilt and relocated. A Tavistock Gazette article entitled "History Takes A Back Street" spoke to the new monument, all 3 feet of it, standing in front of the Memorial Hall, largely

unnoticeable by anyone.

Tavistock's 150th Anniversary in 1998 was an appropriate time to think about Henry Eckstein and all the many pioneers who contributed to our rich history. A new cairn, in the same style as its predecessors and with another new plaque, was erected on our famous five corners. As before, the new cairn was financed from donations.

Today the cairn proudly stands as a testament to our past and a solid assurance of our present and future.

## Research Resurgence!

*Digital access to old German newspapers and more*

175 years ago, Tavistock founder Henry Eckstein seized the opportunity to settle at what is now our main intersection. At that time there was a dead-end, corduroy road from Bell's Corners (Shakespeare) running south to the boundary line between South Easthope and East Zorra. It wasn't until a few years after the Woodstock Plank and Gravel Road was built from Shakespeare to Woodstock in 1852 that Tavistock's main intersection was created.

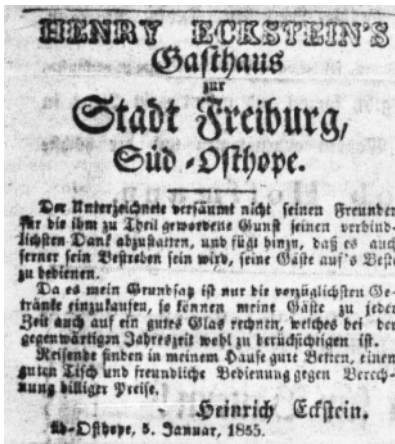
In *The History of Perth County (1825-1902)* written by William Johnston it states that "There were only five families in the place (Tavistock) previous to the completion of the railway (1857). These were: Chas. Wood, storekeeper; D. H. Carss, hotelkeeper; Robert Reid, general utility man; W. H. Munro, tinsmith, and Henry Eckstein, who kept a tavern in a log building."

New research material that has become available online through the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN) will, however, help to paint a more accurate picture of Tavistock's early days. Along with census lists and land records, county gazeteers and business directories, there are now more sources of information with which to investigate our village roots.

CRKN has made available three German newspapers printed in New Hamburg that contain advertisements from Freiburg/Inkermann/Tavistock businessmen. There are more than 60 editions of the *Hamburger Beobachter* (1855-1923) and about 130 editions of *The Neu-Hamburger Neutrale* (1857-1914). In addition there are over fifteen hundred editions of the *Canadische Volksblatt* available with complete copies from 1865 to 1908.

For example, *The Hamburger Beobachter* of January 1855 sees Henry Eckstein advertising his guesthouse in Freiburg and an ad for Voelker & Behre, general merchants in Sebastopol. John J. Voelker had the contract

as the first Tavistock postmaster in 1857. The *Neu-Hamburger Neutrale* refers to both William Munro and John Wolesska selling goods from their respective general stores in Inkermann in 1857. In July of that same year, Fuhr & Witzel and Co. were holding an auction sale in Tavistock, formerly Inkermann.



from the *Hamburger Beobachter* 1855-03-02

Other small tradesmen who were said to be among the first settlers prior to 1857 were John M. Hohner, blacksmith, George Bellinger, saddler and harnessmaker, and Anton Gleucklick, merchant tailor. A business directory from 1857 shows that there were many more businesses in the community at that time. There were three taverns, three general stores, two shoemakers, a mason and plasterer, two blacksmiths and waggonmakers, as well as four carpenters, two grain merchants and a tailor.

During the days before the railroad, those German newspapers were delivered from Stratford, Berlin and New Hamburg on horseback. Fred Krug, who settled in Tavistock in 1860, was one of those delivery boys. He apprenticed with Jacob Wagner, then John Klein, in Eckstein's original log building. Later Mr. Krug became one of Tavistock's most revered businessmen of his time.

Advertisements in these old German newspapers cover communities such as (New) Hamburg, Wilmot, Wellesley, Baden, Mannheim, Phillipsburg, Shakespeare, North and South Easthope, Preston and Berlin, among others. As more and more titles become available online, researchers will find it easier to access the information they require.

To access these newspapers and other information, go to [www.tavistockhistory.ca](http://www.tavistockhistory.ca) and click on the "Research" menu tab at the left of the page.





CELEBRATION JULY 31<sup>st</sup> & AUG. 2<sup>nd</sup> 1948  
1948

*Tavistock's  
150th Anniversary  
Celebration 1998:  
Cairn Unveiling  
at the 5-corners*

*(Photo by Tim Mosher)*



## John Klein: Business As Usual

In Tavistock's pioneer days, John Klein stands out as one of the most successful businessmen and one who contributed greatly to the early advancement and prosperity of the village. His business sense acquired through the operation of his popular general store afforded him investment opportunities in local flour mills and a flax business.

John Klein was born in Germany on April 25, 1831 and came to Canada at a young age. Records show he lived in Wilmot Township with Reinhardt and Maria Klein. John married Catherine Bender in Kitchener on June 9, 1854. The couple had three children, Henry, Charles and Louise.

The family lived near the village of New Hamburg then farmed in South Easthope Township for about a year prior to moving to Tavistock in 1863. Here Mr. Klein took over the general store business of Lewis Mohr which was located in Henry Eckstein's original log building on the northeast corner of the intersection of Woodstock and Hope Streets.

During the winter of 1864-65, Mr. Klein and other town businessmen agreed to raise a total of \$500 for Mr. George Malcolm who was to move his gristing operation from Harmony and erect a flour mill in Tavistock. Through the success of Mr. Klein's general store business, he donated \$100 toward the cause.

In April of 1866, Mr. Klein purchased Lot 5 on Woodstock Street South from George Bellinger, the local saddler and harnessmaker, and took out a mortgage for \$375. In 1869 he purchased Lot 6 and sometime later Mr. Klein built an impressive, two-storey, frame building on the properties, having taken out a mortgage for \$1,100 in 1870. (See photo inset c. 1890 - now the location of the Tavistock Post Office)

Clerking for him at the time was Fred Krug. In 1870, Mr. Krug bought shares of the stock in the new store with Mr. Klein remaining as a silent partner. About 1872, another clerk, Adam Falk, bought out the remaining shares. In 1874, Mr. Krug and Mr. Falk purchased a competing general

store at auction after the death of its owner Jacob Wagner.

Mr. Klein continued to operate the general store with the help of his son Charles while also seeing to the establishment of a flax business and flour mill. The partnership of John Klein and Henry B. Kalbfleisch first began in the flax business about 1873. Early accounts say the mill employed 18 men and turned out from \$15,000 to \$20,000 worth of flax per annum. In early 1884, James Livingstone, MP of Baden, "The Flax King of Canada", purchased the business from Mr. Klein.

Later, Mr. Klein, along with Henry B. Kalbfleisch and Thomas Poehlman, a miller, formed a company known as Klein, Kalbfleisch and Co. They erected the Dominion Flour Mill on Maria Street, becoming operational in early 1877.

In June of that same year Mr. Klein suffered the loss of his wife, Catherine. The funeral procession was said to have extended one quarter mile and, as a result, the train had to stop as the entourage crossed the tracks on their way to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sebastopol for the memorial service and burial.

Mr. Klein then married Elizabeth Wilker, the widow of the late Jacob Wagner, on September 1, 1877.

Mr. Klein and his partners took a great loss in April of 1881 when their mill burned to the ground. It wasn't until 1886 that the mill was rebuilt by another group of investors.

In December of 1884 John Klein sold his general store to Valentine Stock and William Armstrong with Mr. Stock continuing at that location until 1917.

John Klein continued to be a prominent figure in the village and at one time it was thought that he would make a great candidate for the reeveship of the village should it be incorporated.

Mr. Klein passed away at the residence of his son Charles Klein in Tavistock at the age of 82 years on January 5, 1915.



# Memories of our old School

Here's a skill-testing question. A house cost \$4,000. The owner insured it for 4/5 of its cost, the premium being at the rate of 1/4% per annum. For how much a month must the owner rent the house in order that the year's rent may cover 6% of the cost of the house, the year's taxes amounting to \$90, repairs amounting to \$70 and one year's cost of insurance?

If you were a student at Tavistock Public School in 1925 this is just one of the many questions on the Ontario Department of Education High School Entrance Exam. Subjects on the exam covered everything from History to Handwriting with special emphasis on the English language ... grammar, literature and composition. Some of the hardest questions were in the Geography section. Your only tools were a piece of paper and a pen or pencil and, of course, the knowledge that had accumulated during your public school days.

Education was always a priority in the village. From the earliest days in 1848 students attended the one-room school in Sebastopol. For a few months in 1879 classes were held at Loth's Hall behind the Commercial Hotel (now the Hasty Mart).

Exceptionally good news was reported in the November 29, 1879 issue of the Stratford Beacon newspaper. "The opening of the new school house on William Street occurred 24 November. Designed by Alex Hepburn of Stratford, masonry by Hildebrand of Stratford, woodwork by Fuchs of Tavistock. 80 ft by 56 ft., 18 ft ceilings, 2 rooms separated by a sliding door. Bell in cupola." It was definitely a day for celebration with entertainment by the Methodist and Baptist Church choirs. We can almost forgive the reporter who wrote Fuchs when it should have been Tavistock's own Adam Fuhr responsible for woodwork.

In 1898 a second storey was added to accommodate the growing need for space. By 1914 the space was full yet again. Pupils in the lower grades attended classes in Russell's Hall on the corner of Woodstock Street South and Jane Street. With the addition of more rooms to the northeast corner in 1916, all students were in one building.

That building was both public school and continuation school (high



The Old School: top photo c. 1885  
bottom photo c. 1900

school). To qualify and write Senior Matriculation exams Tavistock students attended Stratford District Collegiate. Many took the train to Stratford each morning and returned in the afternoon at a total round trip cost of 15 cents.

By the 1950s high school teachers were scarce and it made sense for Tavistock to join the new Waterloo-Oxford School District. Starting in 1955 all high school students in the village were bussed to Waterloo-Oxford.

The 1960s saw the closure of many one-room country schools in the community and changes to school boundaries. The school population increase, combined with the overall condition of the building, resulted in the decision to build a new public school on Maria Street. That building officially opened in 1966.

The bell in the cupola on the Tavistock Public School on William Street rang for the last time on July 29, 1967 and it rang and rang and rang. It was public auction sale day for Tavistock's old school and contents along with the lot on Hwy 59 that had served as the school garden when agriculture was part of the curriculum. The schoolhouse and grounds brought only \$5,000.

The building was subsequently transformed first into a nursing home and then part of the peopleCare Centre. For many years there were 4 apartments in the building. Plans now call for the demolition of our old school to make way for a new peopleCare campus. While the physical building will disappear, memories of school days

last forever.

What are your best memories of the old Tavistock Public School?

## Tavistock & District Historical Society

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### Volunteers:

Sherrill Calder  
Bill Gladding  
Susan Pellow

## Quick Reminiscences

We are excited to announce a new project ...

### A QR CODE HISTORIC TOUR OF TAVISTOCK.

Scan the QR code included here or at the front door of each named location and you'll be taken to a detailed history of the businesses on that property complete with photos and stories.



### D&D Homestyle Cuisine & Cafe

- 8 Woodstock Street North

### Raja's Thai & Indian Cuisine

- 36 Woodstock Street South

### Tim Hortons

- 21 Woodstock Street North

Quick Reminiscences is an ongoing project.

We're starting with 3 locations with more to follow.

We hope you will help us with these and future QR sites. If you have an interesting story about any of the many Tavistock businesses over the years, please tell us. Old photos? We'd like to see them. If you spot an error that needs correcting, we want to know. The QR stories are "living documents" ... always improving through the combined efforts of researchers and readers.

Keep watch for new QR codes around town with new histories to read. Keep checking back for additions to existing histories. Who knows? You may just find the story you told us or see your photo featured in a *Quick Reminiscence*.

Can't access QR codes? You can read the histories at <https://bit.ly/thqr>